

In the Claims

Applicant has submitted a new complete claim set showing marked up claims with insertions indicated by underlining and deletions indicated by strikeouts and/or double bracketing.

Please amend pending claims 51, 52, and 53 as noted below. The Patent Office has cancelled claim 63.

1-50. (Canceled)

51. (Currently Amended) A method comprising:

shielding a first portion, having a lateral surface dimension of less than 1 millimeter, of a surface of an article with a polymeric mask including at least one channel that defines a second portion of the surface of the article that remains unshielded by the mask, by positioning the mask in conformal contact with the surface without degrading a portion of the mask proximate the second portion of the surface; and

applying an agent to the second portion of the surface of the article.

52. (Currently amended) A method comprising:

shielding a first portion of a curved surface of an article with a polymeric mask by bringing a surface of the mask into conformal contact with the ~~non-planar~~ curved surface of the article; and

allowing an agent to pass through a channel within the mask having a dimension of less than 1 millimeter and to be applied to a second portion of the surface of the article while preventing application of the agent to the first portion with the mask.

53. (Currently amended) A method comprising:

shielding a first portion of a surface of an article with a polymeric masking system by bringing a surface of the masking system having a dimension of less than 1 millimeter into conformal contact with a surface of the article;

allowing an agent to be applied to a second, unshielded portion of the surface of the article while preventing application of the agent to the first portion of the surface of the article with the masking system;

re-placing the masking system; and

applying an agent to at least a portion of the first portion of the surface of the article.

54. (Previously presented) A method as in claim 53, the shielding step comprising contacting the first portion of the surface of the article with a portion of a mask, and the re-placing step comprising removing the mask from the surface and applying the agent to the first portion without shielding the surface of the article with the mask.

55. (Previously presented) A method as in claim 53, the re-placing step comprising re-orienting and re-sealing a mask of the masking system in relation to the surface of the article.

56. (Previously presented) A method as in claim 53, wherein the masking system comprises a second mask, positioned between a source of the agent and a first mask, the first mask positioned between the second mask and the surface of the article.

57. (Previously presented) A method as in claim 56, wherein the first mask seals against the surface of the article and the second mask seals against the first mask.

58. (Original) A method as in claim 57, wherein each of the first and second masks is a flexible polymeric article.

59. (Original) A method as in claim 58, wherein each of the first and second masks is elastomeric.

60. (Previously presented) A method as in claim 59, comprising applying the agent to the second portion of the surface, re-placing the masking system by removing the second mask from the first mask thereby exposing at least a portion of the first portion of the surface while allowing

the first mask to shield another portion of the first portion of the surface, and applying an agent to at least a portion of the first portion of the surface while shielding another portion of the first portion of the surface with the first mask.

61. (Previously presented) A method as in claim 59, comprising applying a first agent to the second portion of the surface, re-placing the mask by removing the second mask from the first mask thereby exposing at least a portion of the first portion of the surface while allowing the first mask to shield another portion of the first portion of the surface, and applying a second, different agent to at least a portion of the first portion of the surface while shielding another portion of the first portion of the surface with the first mask.

62. (Previously presented) A method as in claim 53, comprising applying a first agent to the second portion of the surface, re-placing the mask by removing the second mask from the first mask thereby exposing at least a portion of the first portion of the surface while allowing the first mask to shield another portion of the first portion of the surface, and applying a second, different agent to at least a portion of the first portion of the surface while shielding another portion of the first portion of the surface with the first mask.

63-90. (Cancelled)